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MINUTES OF THE SOUTHERN COMMISSION ON ACCREDITED SCHOOLS*

By DR. HARRY CLARK

Secretary of the Commission

IN the absence of Chairman W. H. Hand, of South Carolina, the Commission on Accredited Schools, of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States, was called to order by Inspector McHenry Rhoads, of Kentucky. Prof. Rhoads was elected chairman for the ensuing year, and Harry Clark, of Tennessee, was re-elected secretary.

ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

Applications for accrediting were considered and doubtful cases were referred to a special committee consisting of Inspectors L. L. Friend, of West Virginia; Gaston A. Porter, of Texas; A. B. Hill, of Arkansas; and J. A. Stoddard, of South Carolina. In view of the unusual conditions due to the war, it was decided that all schools which are now on the list, but fail to meet the requirements as to the scholarship of their faculties, shall be "warned" and given one year to remedy the defect, provided the local state committee is convinced that such schools are honestly trying to meet the standards.

COLLEGES TO BE ACCREDITED

Inspector J. C. Fant, of Mississippi, was appointed a committee of one to wait upon the Executive Committee of the General Association, which was meeting at the same hotel, and present the request of the Commission that the new Commission to Accredite Higher Institutions be convened before the next meeting of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States at New Orleans, October 30, 1919, in order that a definite program might be presented to the Association at that time and a list of accredited colleges be issued at as early a date as possible. Our Commission has received numerous requests for a list of approved colleges, because school boards need such a list to determine the value of diplomas presented by would-be teachers. The Executive Committee approved this request and appointed a committee to draw up a program to be presented to the first meeting of the Commission to Accredite Higher Institutions so as to facilitate the early preparation of an approved list of accredited colleges.

DEANS' REPORTS

Last year's committee on Deans' reports was re-appointed: Supt. Pusey, of North Carolina; Inspec-

tor Cawthon, of Florida; and Principal McCallie, of Chattanooga. This committee was instructed to tabulate the records during the first semester in college of all of last year's graduates of accredited secondary schools.

LIBRARY FACILITIES

On the motion of Inspector L. L. Friend, it was decided that all new schools applying for accrediting shall be required to have a library of five hundred volumes, not including government publications nor duplicate copies of classics. This is now required by the West Virginia State Department of Education in the case of all first-class high schools. All old schools on the Southern list shall be asked to comply with this rule as soon as possible.

SCIENCE UNITS TO BE DEFINED

The two committees on the definition of science units were consolidated, and the new members, Inspectors Fant, Thomas, and Clark, were instructed to draft regulations as to laboratory requirements for schools of different enrollments.

COLLEGES ASKED TO CO-OPERATE

The Secretary was instructed to conduct a propaganda among colleges outside the South in order to secure their support of the Southern list of Accredited Secondary Schools. Strong letters of endorsement were presented to the Commission which had been sent by some of the strongest universities in the North, and the Secretary was instructed to write letters of appreciative thanks to the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania for the high standard they have set in admitting secondary school graduates from the South and the support they have given the Commission by personal letters to Southern secondary schools.

The secretary was instructed to devise a simpler report blank to secure annual data from schools already on the list.

"ADVISED," "WARNED," "DROPPED"

The new blank to indicate whether unsatisfactory schools are "warned," "advised," or "dropped," and the reasons therefor, was approved. Schools that violate only one requirement for accrediting, if it is the belief of the state committee concerned that such schools are trying honestly to meet the standards, shall be "warned," and given one year to remedy the defect.

*The Commission met at Nashville, Tenn., January 9-10, 1919.

If the defect is not removed in one year, the Commission will drop them. Where a school meets the technical minimum requirements of the Commission, but the Commission feels that the resources of the school justify greater progress, or whether certain methods of the school are not modern, such a school shall be "advised" to make certain changes. To insure against the careless pigeon-holing of the report sent to a school on this blank, the state committees were instructed to send duplicates of these criticisms to the principal, superintendent, and school board of each such school.

Inspector Stewart made a motion that no public high school be accredited unless it teaches science; but the Commission, after a debate, decided merely to "advise" each public high school on the list that it should give adequate science courses.

SCHOOLS MUST RUN 36 WEEKS

In the past, Florida schools have been accredited with less than thirty-six weeks of school year on the condition that each class period be lengthened enough to compensate. Owing to climatic reasons and owing to the short stay of the children of Northern tourists in Florida schools, this compromise has seemed necessary. Owing to protests from strong Northern universities, it was decided to accredit no school after the year 1919-'20 that has a school year of less than thirty-six weeks.

VACANCIES FILLED

The following nominations to fill vacancies were sent by a committee to the Executive Committee of the Association and were confirmed by them: Louisiana—Prof. J. A. Lyon, of Tulane University, to succeed Dean E. A. Bechtel; South Carolina—Prof. J. A. Stoddard, of the University of South Carolina, to succeed Prof. W. H. Hand, and Principal W. E. Black, of Greenwood High School, to succeed Supt. S. H. Edmund; Texas—Prof. Gaston A. Porter, of the State Department of Education, to succeed Prof. J. F. McDonald, and Prof. S. R. Spencer, to succeed Prof. J. L. Kesler, of Baylor University; Virginia—Prof. S. P. Duke, State Supervisor of High Schools, to succeed Prof. W. M. Black; West Virginia—Principal Geo. H. Colebank, of Fairmont High School, to succeed Prof. Longanecker; North Carolina—Prof. R. L. Flowers, of Trinity College, to succeed Prof. E. C. Brooks.

IMPORTANT RESOLUTIONS

Inspector J. C. Fant introduced a resolution that any school applying for accrediting after 1920-'21 shall not be accredited until one year shall have expired after the application has been approved. This was adopted by the Commission because there have been a few cases where school boards have conformed with the Commission's regulations in order to secure accrediting and then have lowered their standards the next year. It was felt that this new rule would enable the Commission to be assured that each school board which applies, has adopted a permanently higher standard.

Inspector J. C. Fant introduced a second resolution that the qualifications for academic teachers be increased in the year 1920-'21 to include one year of successful experience in high school teaching. The North Carolina state committeemen reported that this standard is now applied in the case of applications from their state. This year one good school met all the requirements; but the North Carolina committee rejected its applications because all of its teachers were inexperienced. Some of the Commission objected that this would tend to further feminization of the schools, because many young men plan to teach only a brief time and such a rule would discourage them from entering the profession if they were compelled to teach their first year in a non-accredited school at the lower salaries usually paid in such schools. Many instances were cited of prominent educators who entered the profession, expecting to teach only one year but who became permanent teachers. The resolution was finally passed in the following form: "The qualifications for academic teachers shall be increased in the year 1920-'21 to include professional training or one year of successful teaching experience."

CO-OPERATION WITH THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

The afternoon of Friday, January 10, the Commission convened at Peabody College for conference with Inspector J. S. Thomas in the chair in place of Inspector Rhoads, who was forced to return to Kentucky unexpectedly. The faculty members of Peabody College took part in the discussions. In particular, Professor J. J. Didcoct, formerly of the North Central Association, was called into conference in the effort to make the practices of the Southern Commission conform more closely to those of the North Central Commission.

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